

DOCUMENTS

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN
CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

PART THREE
Statements and Resolutions

Edited by
AHMAD VON DENFFER



The Islamic Foundation 

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**DOCUMENTS ON CHRISTIANITY
AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS
No.1**

**DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS
AND MUSLIMS**

3. Statements and Resolutions

**Edited by
Ahmad von Denffer**

The Islamic Foundation

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PREFACE

This collection of 'Statements and Resolutions' brought together from various sources aims at acquainting the reader with some of the reflections of both Christians and Muslims participating in dialogue meetings. A brief survey on encounters and dialogue between Christians and Muslims and a collection of the major 'Guidelines for Dialogue' adopted by Christian institutions and organizations are published separately and shed further light on this side of Christian-Muslim relations. The six documents of the collection on 'Statements and Resolutions' are taken from dialogue meetings between Muslims and Roman Catholics as well as Protestant Christians and have been arranged chronologically. Some of them are extracts, others complete statements. Common to all of them and most important for the Muslim reader is that each document constitutes some kind of declaration of intent, which needs to be considered as such as well as against the background of Christian-Muslim relations, mission and dialogue, as they really are.

It is hoped that the present collection of documents as well as the other papers on Christian-Muslim relations will be of value for both Christians and Muslims, but in particular for Muslims who are in direct contact with Christians on various occasions.

MEMORANDUM

IN SEARCH OF UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION

Christian and Muslim Contributions

For a short but full week Muslims and Christians from twenty countries have met together in Broumana, Lebanon. Some of us had met before and had already begun to share with each other the insights of our respective traditions. Nevertheless many of us have been surprised by the friendly and trusting atmosphere of our conference.

We have met as individuals, without any representative status; but we have found our conversation, our meditations and our life together so significant that we feel bound to record our experiences. This memorandum is not a formal report and does not bind all participants. It has been discussed by consultation but not voted upon. It is one way of confirming these experiences with each other, of sharing them with our own communities and of pledging ourselves and inviting others to further dialogue. This may be the dialogue of verbal colloquy, of shared work and leisure, or of a sense of common adoration of God.

1. What led us to meet?

In some measure we meet because both past history and modernity have made it necessary for our two communities to encounter each other in many varying circumstances across the world. We work together in international and national development. We live together in the same localities and even in the same families. If we once confronted each other in hostility and sometimes failed to implement our own

doctrines of religious freedom, our new feeling of inter-dependence makes it urgent that we seek new ways of dialogue.

For many of us there is a still more pressing reason why we should intensify deliberate efforts to meet each other. Beyond the sense of common humanity and the inter-involvement of Christians and Muslims in history, there is a desire – belated for some of us – to honour together our conscious dependence upon God in a world that often seems to deny Him. We wish together to obey God in the service of our fellow men and in the pursuit of justice and peace.

Some of us also wish to find a theological, and, on occasion perhaps, a devotional framework for our mutual recognition and awareness. There is rich promise in our trying to bind together both the social and the spiritual ties which can unite us in a common basis. We know that we have sometimes widely differing political expectations and motivations, and sometimes widely differing theological language and doctrine between our respective traditions. Yet we have found that as we meet we can be renewed in our commitment to God and our fellow men.

2. Our hopes in the dialogue

We accepted that dialogue is not an attempt to suppress differences but rather to explore them frankly and self-critically together with those who come from another tradition. Rather than being satisfied with a low common denominator, we faced up to sometimes poignant points of tension. Yet we also dared to hope for some convergence, not in impatient syncretism, but in openness to God's further guidance.

We hoped that we could shed all caricatures of each other's social and theological position. Our image of each other is often based on outmoded and by now reformulated positions. We wished to retrieve more positive evaluations of each other. While we saw that the same language or symbols could convey different meanings to our respective communities, we could hope to clarify how fundamental or how incidental these differences are. Such mutual discovery can lead us to a better awareness of what are the authentic issues for our dialogue.

In approaching these issues we accepted a clear individual responsibility. Whatever emerged as claimant upon us must be tested by us ourselves. We do not invite others to undertake something that some of us have not already tried or have not pledged ourselves to try. We dare to hope that such faithful experience may contribute not only to the renewal of our personal commitment to God but also to that of our respective communities.

We see that there is a challenge from the secular world to our religious communities that they should again prove to be the instruments of mutual hatred and division in society. Only if we heed this may we, as religious men, challenge others to ask ultimate questions of life and death, of truth and goodness, of forgiveness and responsibility, of true community and suffering. For our dialogue is not only for our personal enrichment and for the enrichment of our mutual relationship. It is something which we wish to contribute to the world, and to offer to God.

3. Guiding principles for our dialogue

We do not desire to confine our conversation and our collaboration to a group of experts. We feel an obligation to help to make possible a wider spirit and practice of dialogue in our communities. We recognize that different situations call for different sensitivities, but that certain irreducible principles should be respected. The implications of these principles will be particular to various contexts and will need to be patiently and practically worked out.

(a) *Frank witness*: We did not ask each other to suppress or conceal his convictions. In dialogue each should bear witness of his motives to his fellows and to God. This frank witness can help to remove complacency, suspicion or unspoken fears.

(b) *Mutual respect*: We believed that mutual respect was a necessary principle for our dialogue. This does not involve a stale coexistence of 'live and let live', but a sensitive regard for the partner's scruples and convictions, a sympathy for his difficulties and an admiration for his achievements. We

should avoid all invidious comparisons of strength in our tradition with weakness in the other, of the ideal in one with the actuality in the other.

(c) *Religious freedom*: We should be scrupulous about our protection of religious liberty. This involves not only the rights of any religious minority, but also the rights of each individual. While we accept that both religious traditions have a missionary vocation, proselytism should be avoided, whether by a majority intent upon pressing a minority to conform, or whether by a minority using economic or cultural inducements to swell its ranks. It is especially unworthy to exploit the vulnerability of the uneducated, the sick and the young.

4. What have we found in our meeting together?

Talking together with frankness and mutual respect, and aspiring to create conditions for full religious liberty and freedom of conscience, we have explored several major theological themes. Written papers and spoken contributions from members of both religious traditions have begun to show us a wider vision of world community, of our understanding of revelation, and of our role as religious men and women in many differing nation-states.

We commend all these issues for further study. Ideally this should be undertaken in partnership between Christian and Muslim groups or individuals. We believe that theological and spiritual renewal can prepare us for social renewal.

(a) *World community*: Muslims and Christians are called upon to achieve a wider vision of community, inter-racial, inter-cultural and international. This must often be tested and realized at the local level where religious pluralism provides a microcosm of the world's diversity. The quality of openness and co-operation in such local situations should make a vital contribution to the extension of inter-religious harmony and international justice.

We recognize that it is desirable for a community to dedicate itself to the welfare of a local situation or of a nation. There may also be instances where a religious

community must exercise its critical faculty over a local political or socio-economic framework which is narrowly nationalistic, and hinders the establishment of a world community, justice and human dignity. Christians and Muslims must actively contribute to redressing the wrongs of society, even at the expense of their own vested interests.

We expressed our very deep concern about many situations which are a threat to world peace and which create tensions among religious communities. We noted in particular the human tragedy of the Middle East and the many injustices against the people of Palestine, for which the world at large bears responsibility. We hoped that this crisis will be solved in the spirit of compassion and justice.

(b) *Revelation*: In our attempt to be obedient to Truth our respective religious communities are wrestling with their understanding of revelation. We are aware of the suspicion and doubt of many modern men and of the rapidly decreasing impact of traditional language and symbolism. Within our religious traditions there is scope for reconsidering many of our theological and legal constructions; in this we should ensure continuity with the past, notably with our authoritative sources.

In our inter-religious study and colloquy we may find analogous as well as different understandings of revelation: for the Muslim the Qur'an is the Word of God; for the Christian the Christian Scriptures are a witness to the revelation in Jesus Christ. Our dialogue on such issues may help us to be more faithful to our own tradition as well as to be more appreciative of and more coherent with our neighbour.

Some of us felt that in further exploration of the experience of revelation in history and of God's guidance in our own lives we should be more open to the inexhaustible nature of the grace of God. We should also be more ready to bear a feeling of estrangement from our fellow men, even in our own tradition, as we strive, perhaps indeed on their behalf, to achieve a more critical self-awareness.

(c) *Religion and society*: Dialogue does not take place outside a given political and socio-economic context. We

deliberately avoided insisting upon a desideratum of a secular or a religious state as being the more conducive setting for growth towards world community and obedience to Divine revelation. The experience of our conference members was that social justice, spirituality and dialogue can and should be pursued in many differing political and cultural contexts.

Our involvement in society is part of our duty towards God. Some Muslims and Christians can speak of being co-workers with God in making history and in transforming society. We are aware of how we are confronted in new ways with the issue of religion in society. How far have our traditions failed our fellow men? How far do they hold new promise? We work together for self-critical re-evaluation of our roles and of our mutual relationships.

(d) *Our devotional practice*: Our theological and our socio-economic concern need the spiritual basis and eschatological dimension of worship and prayer. Worship and prayer demand of us more than definitions, for they are the experiences of witnessing to God and confronting the world. If our belief in the mercy and the justice of God impels us to work in the affairs of the world, how can Christians and Muslims relate their spiritual life to men's demands for justice, brotherhood and human dignity?

In the first place there is a constant requirement and hunger for each community separately to find spiritual nourishment in revitalized prayer and worship. The neglect of worship and prayer by many of our co-religionists is a challenge to us. The Muslim will be concerned to rediscover the fullness of *salat*, and the Christian to deepen the fellowship of the eucharist.

Where Muslims and Christians meet together we are not only listening to each other, but we are listening for God. On occasion, therefore, Christian and Muslim individuals or groups may also express their mutual understanding and trust in opening themselves to each other's devotional idiom, notably of *dua*, of supplication and meditation. Though conscious of our real and imagined differences in such actual or vicarious spiritual partnership, and though anxious to

avoid misleading others, some of us felt that it was feasible to attempt this kind of inter-penetration of mutual recognition and responsiveness to God.

5. What practical steps do we suggest?

We endorse again the variety of situations in which Muslims and Christians live, talk, think and work together. The dialogue may well carry political or social implications which must be consciously faced. Yet no local situation is completely immune from the possibility of its providing an inspiring example for men in other situations across the world, nor from the possibility of its learning from those others, nor yet from the possibility of its discouraging and embarrassing those others.

Accordingly, we propose a catalogue of practical steps, some of which may be opportune in some situations, but not in others. Yet in our world-wide concerns and in our sense of world-wide community we desire to be alert to as many possible ways forward as there may be.

(a) *In our national and local communities:* Christians and Muslims can and do co-operate with all their neighbours, as well as with each other, actively and prayerfully in nation building, in ensuring human and religious rights, in struggling for justice and peace. They may work as colleagues in teams engaged in rural development, in literacy campaigns, or in medical clinics. They may together try to meet the problems of alienated youth through more patient response to their protest, and through providing counselling services or recreational facilities. Deliberate and self-conscious collaboration between Muslims and Christians, and with others, in such contexts may sometimes produce tensions, but it may also contribute to our mutual reconciliation.

(b) *Within our own religious communities:* In working for the removal of our prejudices and for the furthering of a deeper mutual appreciation we reaffirm the urgency of avoiding all polemic, and of providing text-books, teacher-training and seminary programmes which should be worked out in consultation with each other. We welcomed the

emerging willingness for religious communities' gifts of material and practical aid to be channelled not through a particular religious community but given for the whole community, wherever the need is greatest. We regretted competition in building of places of worship and advocated closer social and spiritual contact between local congregations of the two traditions.

(c) *In further inter-religious dialogue:* We determined to keep in touch with the results of local and international dialogues, and to work together not least in our own home situation in order to establish theological, missiological and societal principles for our dialogue and in order to find more opportunities for dialogue. By dialogue we understood not only meetings such as this, but also social collaboration, intellectual cross-fertilization, and, for some, vicarious participation in each other's devotional life.

We also took notice of our peculiar joint involvement in the traditional status of Jerusalem, the destiny of its people, and the historic significance of its religious and social character. On these spiritual and international problems, we aspired to the unity which that city should symbolize for all believers in God.

We are grateful for the initiative taken by the World Council of Churches, and hope that it will continue in its commitment to this dialogue. There is need to widen the basis of future dialogue, and therefore we look forward to initiatives by and co-ordination with various Christian and Muslim bodies.

DECLARATION OF CORDOBA

In the name of God. Taking as a point of departure a common belief in God and in the religious and moral values called upon by both Islam and Christianity; wishing for a common effort to deepen the faith in God, for the greatest benefit of the Muslims and the Christians as well as for the benefit of all mankind; hoping to eliminate the misunderstandings or the lack of understanding which have existed in the past in relations between Christians and Muslims, the Association for the Islamic-Christian Friendship of Spain has called for the gathering of the Islamic-Christian Congress. The delegations and personalities of 23 Muslim countries have responded to the invitation and the Congress has been held in the city of Cordoba from the 10th to 15th September, 1974 (i.e. 23rd to 28th of the month of Sha'ban of the year 1394 of Hijra). The following subjects have been discussed during the sessions:

1. A Christian presentation of Islam as religion in a way that Muslims would acknowledge.
2. A Muslim presentation of Christianity as religion in a way that Christians would acknowledge.
3. Reciprocal implications of the political expansion and of religion.
4. Crises of faith and experiences in religious education in Islam and Christianity.
5. Common areas of action where Muslims and Christians could collaborate

Numerous presentations on those themes have been given. They were followed by discussion in which the various

members of the Congress participated. These debates took place in an open spirit, deep and brotherly At the end of this historical encounter, the Congress is pleased to present to the Muslim and Christian world as well as to all those who love peace, the following recommendations:

1. To carry out Islamic Christian co-operation to affirm the belief in God and to deepen the religious and human values, leaving the study of the doctrinal differences to the specialists, while respecting each other's viewpoints.
2. To develop the joint work of Muslim and Christian specialists in order to disseminate the truth of faith.
3. To facilitate exchange and co-operation in the field of scientific research and especially the study of the Muslim and Christian documents and manuscripts.
4. To revise the errors which affect the two communities in the educational programmes and school-books of Muslims and Christians.
5. To promote exchanges and meetings in order to pursue dialogue in matters of common concern.
6. To organize after two years at Cordoba the next meeting to pursue the study of the themes which interest the two communities and to evaluate the results of the present Congress.
7. To promote the organizing of similar congresses in other Muslim and Christian countries in order to co-operate for the realization of the objectives of this Congress.
8. To ask Muslims and Christians that they preoccupy themselves with the spread of their doctrine among their own believers.
9. To make aware those religious institutions, Islamic and Christian, which handle the media, education and activities in culture and arts, not to introduce any element of corruption in their activities.

10. To co-operate between Muslims and Christians to prevent aggressions and persecutions from which the religious minorities suffer and otherwise to work for putting a stop to those problems, and to promote peace and justice.
11. To uphold the just national and human rights of the Palestinian people, to consider the PLO as the sole legal organization representing them. To affirm in the same way the Arab character of the city of Jerusalem, refuting any project of Judaizing it, dividing or internationalizing this city. To condemn also the aggressions which the Israeli occupational authorities commit against the religious places, Muslim and Christian, especially in the Al Aqsa Mosque

And also call for the release of all the imprisoned, especially the people of Muslim and Christian religion.

To support the just fight of the Palestinian people and to demand the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories.

12. To consider the Muslim and Christian monuments in the whole world to be the heritage of humanity which need to be safeguarded and to make visible the achievements of the Spanish government in this area.
13. To constitute a commission in order to realize the recommendations of this Congress.

At the end of this meeting the participants in this Congress considered it their duty to manifest their deep gratitude to all those who have contributed, be it in Spain or outside, to the realization of this meeting and who have facilitated its unwinding. They thank especially the people and the religious and civil authorities of the city of Cordoba, praising especially the spirit of kindness which has allowed the opening of the Mosque for the prayers of the Muslims.

MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN SOCIETY

Towards Goodwill, Consultation and Working Together in South-East Asia

The place and manner of our meeting

Over 30 Muslims and Christians, in almost equal numbers, met in Hong Kong from 4 to 10 January, 1975, to discuss the theme 'Muslims and Christians in society: towards goodwill, consultation and working together in South-East Asia.' They were made welcome in Hong Kong by local Christians and Muslims and worshipped there with their respective communities. The conference was organized by the department for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, in co-operation with a committee of Muslims and Christians from South-East Asia and the Christian Conference of Asia. The joint chairmen were a Muslim, Senator Mamintal Tamano from the Philippines, and a Christian, Dr. Peter Lutuihamallo from Indonesia. Papers were prepared by Professor Cesar Majul of the Philippines and Dr. Ahmad Ibrahim of Malaysia, on the Muslim side. On the Christian side, Dr. Ihromi of Indonesia, Sister Theresa Thong of Malaysia and Mrs. Portia Mapanao of the Philippines introduced subjects which ranged from theological grounds for inter-religious respect to practical experience of the role of religion in promoting or disturbing social harmony.

This is the first time that such a regional conference has been held in South-East Asia, although several of the participants have attended international Christian-Muslim dialogues or have been active in their local situations in conversation and co-operation with their neighbours of another faith. The conference considered some guidelines

which may further stimulate regional and local dialogues of this nature, not only in the interests of nation-building and community development, but also in the interests of building up spiritual values and resources of goodwill, respect and faith in the face of common problems and opportunities in the modern world.

The participants expressed their joy in meeting together and they also hoped that such encounters might be repeated in the future. They discussed the following memorandum which, without presuming to speak for any religious organization or community as a whole, nevertheless met with the careful and glad consensus of all those present who recommended it to their respective communities for further consultation and, where appropriate, implementation.

The need for Muslim-Christian dialogue in South-East Asia

It is a sad fact that, often in the past and even at the present time, attitudes of exclusivism, of condescension or of hostility have characterized relations between Muslims and Christians in South-East Asia. We Christians and Muslims, coming together in dialogue in Hong Kong from different situations, whether of co-operation and harmony or of tension and conflict between our communities in South-East Asia, recognize that any negative attitudes do not reflect the true character of either of our faiths. Any such attitudes illustrate the gap which exists in both communities between the high principles of religious teaching and the actual practices of their adherents.

Our purpose in Hong Kong has been to face up to the fact that we come from religiously pluralistic societies in South-East Asia, wherein not only is conflict clearly disastrous but even peaceful co-existence is an inadequate condition for the urgent needs of our developing societies. Our respective national societies, we feel, have a right to expect from the faithful communities of Christians and Muslims not conflict, not mere coexistence, but goodwill, a readiness to confer with each other and an eagerness to co-operate in every possible way. Muslims and Christians

need each other's help to ease tension, secure justice, relieve pain and otherwise promote the social, material and spiritual well-being of all people.

The theological bases for Muslim-Christian relations and for the relations of both with all neighbouring religions and ideologies

We Christians and Muslims meeting in Hong Kong affirm that our respective faiths, properly understood, enjoin on us a loving relationship with each other and with all human beings. The ground and impetus for this loving relationship is no less than the One God Himself who has made all human beings brothers and sisters. Muslims emphasize that God the Compassionate (*Al-Rahman*) and the Beloved (*Al-Habib*) commands the faithful to be merciful and compassionate and loving in their dealings with all people, and therefore they are able to be so. The Qur'an embodies this command and specifies ways in which the faithful may obediently comply with it in various life situations. Christians, for their part, emphasize that God's love shown in his self-giving in and through the person of Jesus Christ both inspires and enables their loving relationship with all humankind. Responding to God's love in Jesus Christ, Christians find the example and basis for love in their social dealings with all people. Thus, allowing for these differences in understanding, both Islam and Christianity find their ethical mandate in the All-Merciful God who loves and is loved.

We Christians and Muslims in South-East Asia are only too painfully aware of how far short we have fallen from God's Will for us in our encounters with one another. We acknowledge together that individuals and groups from both communities have often forgotten that power – whether financial or political or social or cultural or intellectual or spiritual – is a trust (*amanah*) from God to be used responsibly and compassionately for the well-being of all, and not abused to advance the selfish interests of a particular individual or group or ideology.

People are naturally apprehensive regarding the possible misuse of power. Some Muslims, for example, complain that

in certain places Christian groups have advanced and continue to advance their cause in South-East Asia by insensitive use of financial resources coming from the West. On the other hand, there are Christians who feel anxious about their position as a religious community in some places where political and/or financial power may belong predominantly to Muslims. Both Christians and Muslims ought readily to acknowledge that such accusations and apprehensions are not wholly unjustified on either side. In those places where assurances are needed and have not yet been given, both Christians and Muslims ought eagerly to affirm that neither community intends to misuse power to its own advantage.

The prerequisites of peace and humanity oblige both the Muslim and Christian communities to accept emotionally as well as intellectually the fact of their mutual existence in South-East Asia, with Muslims and Christians recognizing each other as full and equal citizens of our national societies.

Christianity and Islam, along with Judaism, are in a special relationship with each other. We belong to the spiritual family of Abraham (*nabi Ibrahim*). We seek to be faithful and strive to be obedient in accordance with God's Command and in response to God's Grace or Favour. We have many theological and ethical convergences and similarities. While in the not so distant past Christians and Muslims accentuated their differences to such a degree that some sectors in our respective communities regarded each other as unfriendly rivals, we now gratefully recognize that we are moving into a new era. In this new era our common ground is recognized as the context in which to understand our differences and we stretch out our hands in friendship and embrace each other as members of kindred communities of believers.

To be sure, Christians and Muslims possess distinctive elements in their respective faiths which they regard as precious treasures. Muslims have the Qur'an which in their belief and understanding is the revelation from God sent through His Messenger as a command, a light, a guidance, and a blessing for all people. Christians have the Good News of the mighty acts of God in and through Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind. A loving relationship with human beings leads Muslims and Christians to appreciate and

respect these distinctive treasures of their respective faiths. Unfortunately, history provides some instances where Christians and Muslims sought coercively to impose their faiths on people who were resistant. Islam and Christianity, we believe, are in agreement that there can be no compulsion in religion. Wherever methods of compulsion, overt or covert, blatant or subtle, are still employed in order to draw people of one faith into another faith, these methods should be renounced as unworthy of Christianity and Islam.

Christians and Muslims both recognize it as a duty and a privilege to reduce areas of misunderstanding between their respective religious communities and between themselves and others, while all the time affirming the integrity and dignity of human beings. We affirm that all human relationships should point to God as the Beginning and the End of all things.

Two methods of fostering understanding especially commend themselves to us. The first of these entails witnessing in society to the highest and best in our respective religions by the example of our personal manner of life, behaviour and worship. The second method involves us in engaging, in a spirit of goodwill, in discourse with all interested persons about the teachings of our respective religions.

Areas of common concern in social and political contexts

1. Varying situations of the relationships between our religious communities.

We believe that God has a purpose for our communities, however different their respective situations. We believe that we should respond to his purpose by working together for a moral and just society; true prosperity cannot be achieved without the individual's personal commitment to morality and justice.

We live in a world where power is sometimes abused. At all levels of our societies we bear a responsibility to help establish the conditions for the right of power. Decision-making processes in the hands of responsible persons who

are just and sensitive to the needs of all people will enhance the effective use of power. Muslims and Christians, like their other neighbours, often fail to live up to this responsibility, but we believe that we have a duty to strive individually and together to contribute to and to implement the aspirations of our respective religious communities.

Political harmony is precious to both communities. All human aspirations can best be realized under a condition of peace and order. However, such a climate can only be fully attained within a political and legal framework which ensures freedom and harmonious interaction for all religious communities. We commend the positive and creative role which governments may play in helping to reduce tensions and conflicts between religious communities.

Nevertheless, political stability can sometimes breed complacency. Muslims and Christians should remain alert to the way in which selfish tendencies can creep in. Freedom may be eroded and lost by subtle encroachments rather than by abrupt and dramatic aggression. This can happen when self-interest or group-interest predominates over the common welfare. Accordingly, Muslims and Christians should make a conscious effort to seek each other's assistance to defend their common interest and to work together in the service of their neighbours and of God.

We have tasks to perform even in situations where our religious communities may be politically weak or powerless, or where they may suffer formal or actual legal disabilities. One among these tasks is working together for reconciliation and reconstruction.

2. The response of religions to changing values in rapidly-developing societies.

Historically, Islam and Christianity have contributed much to the development of human societies, notably in the formulation of ethical values. However, there has been a tendency for social traditions and laws, embodying those values, to become too dogmatic or legalistic so as to be closed to worthwhile change as society has sought to respond to emergent needs. Moreover, to a certain extent our two

religions have seemed to some sectors of society to be conservative and resistant to progress.

There are many who feel that religion is and ought to be an immovable anchor in rapidly changing social situations. But we feel that our fast changing societies are right to expect that Muslims and Christians should subject their own ethical values to careful scrutiny in the light of new situations which demand new duties and fresh responses. The spiritual and ethical foundations of our two faiths are the constant sources of light and guidance, but the situations upon which the light must shine and to which the guidance must be given are continually changing.

The response of our two religious communities to situations of rapid social change involves the mobilization of our resources for a variety of concerns, among which are: concern for the dignity of mankind and the basic rights of the individual; concern for social justice; concern for the character and shape of national consciousness; and concern for freedom in the choice and practise of religion.

Of special importance for our religious communities in some situations is the matter of proselytism. We are moved to call upon all religious bodies and individuals to refrain from proselytism, which we define as the compulsive, conscious, deliberate and tactical effort to draw people from one community of faith to another.

Our religions have the responsibility to alert society to religious, moral and spiritual values in the changing circumstances of daily life. Our responsibility is to enhance the total development of the human personality, spiritually and socially, and to stand squarely behind all that promotes justice and peace. Our religions are called upon to offer fresh motivations and fresh guidance for the growing expectations and changing aspirations of human beings in society.

Consultation and co-operation between our religious communities

Although no single political system can be applied to our diverse situations in South-East Asia, we do find a common range of mutual involvement and co-operation for our

religious communities. In order to encourage responsible citizenship and participation in the lives of our respective nations, we recognize as areas of common concern and we commend as fruitful areas of consultation and co-operation at all levels of our societies the following:

- (a) common concern for the preservation of the rule of law, the maintenance of a free and responsible press, the safeguarding of academic freedom, and the affirmation and protection of human values in an expanding technological society;
- (b) striving to ensure for all sectors of our communities adequate participation and fair representation in decision-making and the just exercise of power through responsible leadership;
- (c) striving to overcome the dangers that ideological forces can pose to our religious faiths and beliefs;
- (d) sharing a challenge and expectation to create a society which values and preserves the quality of life in terms of humanitarian and spiritual duties;
- (e) co-operation in encouraging responsible parenthood and measures for environmental control to preserve the ecological balance for future generations.

Co-operation in relief and rehabilitation

We deplore deliberate and unnecessary multiplication of competitive charitable organizations and social agencies. However, we warmly welcome the development of any initiative on the part of either community or both where such an initiative is needed and has due regard for human dignity and the religious sensitivities of the beneficiaries. For instance, where the relief is extended principally at the initiative of one religious community, distribution should be on the basis of need rather than affiliation. To accomplish this, consultation between the religious communities, whether donors or recipients, in the matters of planning, administration and implementation of relief programmes is imperative;

otherwise misunderstanding and suspicion will ensue. These requirements of impartiality and partnership must equally apply in the no less urgent programmes of rehabilitation. All these efforts should avoid encouraging dependence, but should lead to self-reliance coupled with a spirit of constructive self-giving.

Even as we may undertake the present tasks of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in some of our societies we feel the urgency to plan ahead for programmes and measures which are directed towards avoidance in the future of possible tensions and other sources of conflict between our communities.

Some specific examples of Muslim-Christian collaboration in social work

1. In Indonesia, there exists the so-called inter-religious Co-operation for Community Organization (ICCO). It is a local organization which is jointly run by Muslims and Christians. The motivation is to meet direct human needs. The Organization operates in big cities like Jakarta, Surabaya and Semarang. In Jakarta, the area of activities is mainly concentrated in the new industrial slums of the northern part of the city, and the co-operation of the local city government is required. Funds, personnel and other facilities have been contributed by the religious groups and other private sources. Examples of social needs include family planning, housing problems, sanitation and teaching various skills to unemployed trishaw drivers who have been victims of the modernization of city traffic.

2. In Malaysia, Muslims and Christians with peoples of other faiths do joint study to see how they can advance together in the field of welfare; for example in 1973 a national seminar was organized by the Government to help Muslim, Christian and other voluntary organizations of the various faiths to see how they could best plan for their individual projects. In the same year, another national seminar was organized – the initiative was again taken by the Government – to see how best Muslim, Christian, Buddhist,

Hindu and other voluntary organizations, without prejudice to their internal autonomy, could maximize their efforts in nation-building in the face of changing values and structures in Malaysia.

In ventures taken by Christians, Muslims are members of the board of directors, advisors, committee members and staff members. There is inter-religious co-operation at all levels from the planning to the implementation of the project to serve the multi-racial and multi-religious needs of beneficiaries. In times of flood and other disasters, welfare work on a national basis is carried out under the sponsorship of the Social Welfare Department in co-operation with religious and secular welfare agencies.

To provide peace in Malaysia there is the Malaysia Inter-Religious Organization, duly registered, the objects of which are:

- (a) to promote peace in Malaysia in particular and in the world in general;
- (b) to practise and spread the idea of the dignity of man and the spirit of brotherhood among all peoples by transcending the differences of race, nationality, sex, language or creed;
- (c) to practise and promote mutual understanding and co-operation among all religions.

3. In the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao and Sulu, there are Christian and Muslim organizations attending to the needs of the people (some of whom have been displaced by present tensions) regardless of religious affiliation. In Cotabato, joint ventures have been undertaken by the CORUM (Cotabato Rural Uplift Movement), the Notre Dame Social Action Centre, the Sultan Kudarat Islamic Teachers' Association and the Southern Diocesan Social Action Office. In Sulu, there is the Jolo Community Development Centre. These groups have often launched joint projects involving assistance in the form of food, shelter and agricultural materials such as seeds, fertilizers and chemicals, work animals or tractor power. Joint efforts at providing for the housing needs of Christians and Muslims on the low-income

level are well exemplified by the Notre Dame village in Cotabato and the Kazanyangan Housing co-operative in Jolo. The CORUM links up with the Consultative Council on Rurban (Rural-Urban) Development in its housing assistance for Muslim and Christian refugees.

4. In Singapore, bilateral Muslim-Christian relationships have been seen primarily within a multi-religious context. Since the relationships are set in a pragmatic society the concern has been for a fuller understanding of the life-style of an industrial society. The youth, for example, through the Singapore Inter-Religious Organization in conjunction with the Singapore Society of Spiritual Culture, have been helped by camps, seminars, and leadership training institutes to focus on actual social problems, to suggest areas of positive response, and to assume a responsible role in nation-building.

Religious education in pluralistic societies

Both Christians and Muslims recognize it as a duty to provide religious instruction for the young, emphasizing those elements which enrich life, show its significance and point to its final destiny in God. We realize that ways of religious instruction vary in the different countries of South-East Asia. In some there are government ministries responsible for this work. In others this responsibility is left to parents or to the religious communities. While both communities hold that parents have a major responsibility for the religious instruction of their children, there is also a realistic appreciation that public and private educational programmes can offer important opportunities for religious instruction. Indeed, in some places our respective communities have established schools of their own for just such purposes.

With respect to the latter, a question arises when a school is established by one religious community in a place inhabited predominantly by adherents of another religious community, and/or when there is a substantial enrolment of youngsters who are not from the faith of those who own and operate the school. The question is, what is the responsibility

of the school for the religious instruction of children who come from families not of its faith? Whereas some will say that if a school is founded by people committed to a particular religious faith in order to be an instrument for the propagation of that faith, its responsibility is limited to teaching that religion only, we Muslims and Christians meeting at Hong Kong have another view. We believe that schools providing religious instruction for children from different religious communities should arrange to have such instruction given by qualified persons belonging to the respective communities. Christian children should receive religious instruction from a Christian, Muslim children from a Muslim, and so forth. We feel that it is a form of 'compulsion in religion' for malleable, impressionable children in their formative years to be subject to religious training by instructors not of the faith of their parents.

This is not to say that there should be no place for the scientific study of religion. Both Islam and Christianity recognize that people have a duty to extend the frontiers of their knowledge and this includes knowledge of other religions besides their own. Moreover, because the study of religion is properly seen as an integral part of the total educational programme, courses in the philosophy, sociology, psychology and comparative study of religion may be offered at the higher levels of education in schools and colleges.

Building unity in diversity

The expression 'unity in diversity' is well known in South-East Asian nations, all of which are faced initially at the national level with a task of forging common goals and a common identity from the rich variety of races, languages, cultures and religions within their national borders. The seal of the Republic of Indonesia bears the Sanskrit words *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which mean 'unity in diversity'. The some 120 million Muslims and 47 million Christians who live with other neighbours in the lands of South-East Asia contribute significantly to the diversity of each nation and likewise have vital roles to play in the shape of national unity in their different places.

Because we belong to kindred communities of faith, there are doubtless many things which Christians and Muslims can do together to foster the unity of peoples in society. Among them we can identify the following:

1. Achieve and maintain peace between themselves, since not only national unity but regional stability are both advanced when the different religious communities live together in peace and harmony.

2. Witness together for the religious and moral perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all human beings in the face of dehumanizing forces.

3. Unite together to strengthen the moral conscience of national endeavour – affirming those aspects of nation-building which operate for the common good, and, in obedience to God's will, calling attention to those aspects which are harmful or oppressive.

4. Promote together a human appreciation of the cultural achievements of all the diverse communities which make up the society – valuing those worthy achievements as the common property of the whole nation and of humanity.

5. Represent together the transcendent dimension of human beings in mundane society of men and women, old and young, who, in the final analysis, belong not only to this world of time and matter, but also to the Eternal.

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE TRIPOLI SEMINAR ON ISLAMIC-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE*

In the name of the Benign and Merciful God

Under the sign: 'Call towards the way of thy God through wisdom and the best exhortation' and 'Let us seek, therefore, what strengthens peace and brotherhood'.

In an atmosphere of hope and mutual trust, with a common awareness of responsibility for the future of man, threatened by real dangers, the Seminar on Islamic-Christian Dialogue was held in the city of Tripoli (Libyan Arab Republic) from 1 to 6 Safar 1396 (Hegira), corresponding to 1-6 February, 1976, under the patronage of the Libyan Arab Republic and the Holy See.

Numerous Muslim and Christian thinkers, belonging to different countries in the world, took part in this Seminar, which was attended also by observers: Muslim '*Ulema*' and Christian ecclesiastics: Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants; as well as intellectuals, politicians and journalists from over 60 countries.

The aim of this Seminar is to create a new atmosphere of mutual confidence between the Muslim world and the Christian world, working to clear away the various difficulties and the after-effects inherited from the periods of divergence, discord and colonization, seeking their real causes and making joint efforts to eliminate them. It is important to construct bridges of understanding and co-operation between those who embrace the two religions, to

*The Vatican afterwards refused to accept 20 and 21 of this declaration, although its representatives took part in preparing them.

create an atmosphere that will assist understanding of the material and moral crises that modern man is enduring, in order to find practical solutions for them. The participants are convinced, in fact, that religion remains the authentic source of inspiration to carry out all this, because it is not only a sum of spiritual values, but it also harmonizes the relations between material life and spiritual aspirations. Humanity is living at present under the weight of a series of injustices.

Man finds himself today, it is true, in a state of restlessness, anxiety, spiritual exile, estrangement from all inner peace and happiness. He struggles in a hell of misfortunes, caused by the oppression of materialism, which draws the world away from the source of good, justice and piety; sources of which religion is the real and authentic origin.

The commitment for the liberation of man from all forms of ignorance, injustices, tyranny and exploitation, finds its foundation in religion. It is, consequently, the duty of every believer. There are priorities that no 'Heavenly Religion' can sacrifice, or neglect to affirm, including: the dignity of man, his right to life, freedom, justice and equality.

In this order of ideas, the following subjects have been dealt with and discussed:

1. Can religion be an ideology for life?
2. The common doctrinal bases between the two religions and the meeting points in the different sectors.
3. Social justice, the fruit of faith in God.
4. What can be done to destroy the prejudices and lack of confidence that continually divide us?

Two experts, one Muslim and the other Christian, set forth the same subject, each from the point of view he represents. A positive debate, marked by frankness and clarity, took place in an atmosphere of freedom of thought and responsibility. In this same discussion, the two parties affirmed the capacity of religion to meet the needs of our time.

The two parties agreed that religion is above all ideologies. The Muslim side affirmed the capacity of Islam to establish

a system of life and society valid for all times and all places, through a global view of the Universe, of life, characterized by authenticity, balance and realism. The Christian side affirmed, moreover, that Christianity is concerned, in the first place, with spiritual values, and considers it a duty to inspire ideologies with these values.

The two parties also examined the doctrinal questions of the two religions. They affirmed the convergence of the two religions in belief in God, One and Unique, in spite of the difference in their respective conceptions of God. They also affirmed the necessity of joint action to consolidate spiritual values, moral principles and the happiness of Man.

The points of view of the two parties met on the fact that social justice is a fruit of faith in God, and injustice, in all its forms, is contrary to the spirit and the letter of religion. The Muslim side stated that Islam presents a global and complete system for social justice in all its human, social and economic aspects. The Christian side affirmed that Christianity directs man in his conduct with a view to realizing social justice. The Church has taken several initiatives in social teaching and its application.

In an atmosphere of frankness and a sincere desire to leave behind the errors of the past and turn over a new page, inaugurating relations established on understanding and co-operation, the two parties examined the different questions that have caused so much hostility, suspicion and lack of confidence, thus giving rise to estrangement between the two worlds: Muslim and Christian. The Muslim side listened with interest to the paragraphs of the Declaration of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, particularly the ones concerning the new attitude to Muslims. The Muslim side saw in this a good initiative, making it possible to turn over the pages of the past, which belong to History. The two parties agreed to begin a new page, based on respect, co-operation and joint action for the good of Humanity.

To put in concrete form the noble aims for which the dialogue was organized, the Seminar adopted the following resolutions and recommendations:

1. The two parties affirm their faith in God, One and

Unique; they recommend working actively, in common, to study religious and moral values more deeply;

2. The two parties honour all the Prophets and Messengers of the 'Heavenly Religions'. The two parties denounce all attempts to disparage or discredit the Prophets and Messengers, because that is against the will of God who sent them;

3. The two parties affirm that religion, in its essence, is the source of moral commitment and that it is the fundamental guide of the conduct of individuals, communities and States;

4. The organization of life cannot be accomplished outside religion, which guides Humanity along the right way and the straight path; consequently, the two parties affirm that religion is the basis of just legislation, and that all legislation established by man is unable to reach perfection;

5. The two parties affirm that faith in God necessarily implies support of rights all over the world, and contributes to the victory of man's dignity and happiness. They exhort all the forces of good in the world to put this principle into practice in the conduct of individuals, communities, peoples and States, to mobilize them to confront injustice in all its forms and to bring about the triumph of man's dignity and realize his welfare and his freedom;

6. In respect of man's dignity, the two parties reject and denounce racial discrimination in all its forms, because it is a degradation of man, who is honoured by God;

7. In order to realize the welfare of man, the two parties affirm the necessity of uniting efforts in order to put in the service of humanity development programmes, economic planning and the distribution of wealth and international exchange, because the existence of millions of starving and underprivileged people, in different parts of the world, is a disgrace of humanity, and attacks all religious values. Consequently, the two parties make an urgent appeal to all States and international institutions and organizations which deal with development questions, to take this task into consideration before all others;

8. The two parties affirm the necessity of freedom of religious belief and the exercise of religious practice, as well as the right of families to give their children a religious education. They denounce religious persecution in all its forms; they consider that the regimes and ideologies that persecute believers are inhuman;

9. The two parties affirm that the promotion of peace is part of the mission of religion. The two parties aspire to the realization of peace on the basis of justice and respect for rights. They call upon the countries that possess destructive arms to stop manufacturing them, and to dedicate their efforts to the service of peaceful aims, to bring about the happiness and the prosperity of humanity;

10. The two parties are convinced that religion gives a global conception of creation and the universe. The two parties insist that science is in harmony with religion and that all progress in the field of science affords new proof of the greatness of God, who created the universe in a perfect way, and organized it in conformity with laws and norms, the precision and marvellous character of which science is discovering daily. Science must always remain in the service of religion, observe its values and ideals and remain oriented towards the service of humanity. Thus science becomes a protection against the atheism and the confusion that have affected a large number of young people in the world, making them think wrongly that science contradicts religion. Certainly science, when it strengthens faiths, can contribute to a solution of the different problems of youth;

11. Considering the effective role of youth in building the future, the two parties recommend the necessity of being concerned with curricula and means of education in institutes and schools, so that religious values and moral virtues may figure among their aims. These curricula and means of education must be exempt from anything that may interfere with faith, morality and understanding among peoples;

12. The two parties encourage translation of the 'Heavenly Books' into all languages and condemn all attempts to confiscate these books, or prevent their circulation in any part of the world;

13. The Christian side hopes that the Muslim side will carry out the historical researches and studies of deep interpretation necessary for the real and scientific 'evaluation' of the Sacred Scriptures;

14. The Muslim side hopes that the Christian side will do everything in its power to separate the Church from the Cordova Mosque, and to do so as soon as possible;

15. The two parties recommend the necessity of working together to control errors and wrong allegations in school curricula and books as well as in the works of certain orientalist and scholars concerning the beliefs of each party; they will do so for the purpose of rectifying them in conformity with the respective beliefs of each party. The Muslim side has appreciated the initiative of the Christian side, promising to consult Muslim '*Ulema*' regarding everything written about Islam in schools depending on the Christian side;

16. The patrimony of civilization and culture belongs to the whole of mankind. It is the right of mankind to receive this patrimony in a correct, just way. In view of the circumstances of mistrust that existed between the Muslim world and the Christian world, the two parties ask universities, religious and theological institutes to invite professors of both religions;

17. With a view to real co-operation between the Muslim world and the Christian world, the two parties recommend ending all pressure exerted by Christians on Muslims to turn them away from their beliefs or by Muslims on Christians for the same purpose;

18. Lebanon, dear to the hearts of Muslims and Christians, has been exposed to the subversion that has caused thousands of innocent victims. Certain subversive elements concerned, both inside and outside Lebanon, have tried to present the conflict as being of a confessional nature between Muslims and Christians. This allegation is not only an attack on Muslims and Christians in Lebanon but also aims at bringing about the failure of the serious attempts at

rapprochement and friendship between the Muslim world and the Christian world. For this reason, the two parties denounce the subversion that has taken place in Lebanon, and denounce its camouflage as a confessional conflict. They also denounce any attempt to partition Lebanon and any attempt to interfere with the tolerant coexistence of all the spiritual families of Lebanon;

19. In order to reduce the gap in the field of science between the developed and the developing states and convinced of the right of all peoples to progress, the two sides appeal to the International Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) to draw up a universal Charter concerning the right of all people to the acquisition of scientific development, technology and its processes. This charter should be approved by the Organization of the United Nations (UNO).

The Third World countries in particular must not be deprived of this right.

All Conferences that deal with questions of raw materials must examine the necessity of giving the developing states which supply these raw materials access to technology and its processes. If this is done, it will save the world a probable scission between the Third World and the developed world;

20. The two parties regard revealed religions with respect; consequently they distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, considering Zionism an aggressive racist movement, extraneous to Palestine and to the whole region of the East;

21. Respect for rights and for justice and concern for peace, and faith in the rights of peoples to self-determination, lead the two parties to affirm the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their lands; to affirm the Arab character of the city of Jerusalem, and reject plans to Judaize or internationalize it; to denounce all attacks on the sacred character of the Holy Places; the two parties demand the liberation of all prisoners in occupied Palestine and at their head Muslim '*ulema*' and Christian religious; they also demand the liberation of all the occupied territories

and call for the constitution of a permanent commission to investigate attempts to change the character of the Islamic and Christian Holy Places;

22. In other critical situations, such as is the case of the Philippines, the two parties must undertake a joint initiative, to arrive at adequate solutions in a spirit of justice and fairness;

23. The two parties have decided to set up a permanent mixed commission with the task of carrying out these resolutions and recommendations, and all the questions connected with them; this commission will also have the task of preparing other Seminars and meetings;

24. With all esteem and consideration, the two parties greet His Excellency Colonel Mouammar Gaddafi, President of the Command Council of the Revolution, who sponsored this Seminar and took part positively in its discussions. The attention he bestowed on the dialogue has contributed to its success.

These resolutions and recommendations have been adopted, thanks to the agreement of the two parties, Muslim and Christian, on the meaning of the dialogue, its aims and its norms. They have agreed that the aim of this dialogue is the exchange of knowledge and ideas that contribute to a better mutual knowledge of history and civilization, between the participants of the two religions, in order to clarify convergences and divergences, sincerely and objectively, allowing each party to cling to its beliefs, its obligations and its commitments, in a spirit of concord and mutual respect.

The two parties in the dialogue take this opportunity to present their warm thanks to all those who have taken part in this Seminar, either by their presence, their interventions, their observations, or any contribution whatsoever to the success of this dialogue, however modest these contributions may be, for they are great, in God's eyes.

We praise God the Almighty, who, in all His mercy, has granted us this meeting in a brotherly way, during the Islamic-Christian dialogue in Tripoli.

**STATEMENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON
'CHRISTIAN MISSION AND ISLAMIC DA'WAH'
- CHAMBESY, JUNE, 1976**

1. In recognition that mission and *da'wah* are essential religious duties in both Christianity and Islam, a conference on Christian Mission and Islamic *Da'wah* was organized by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, in consultation with the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, on 11 Jumada 28 – Rajab 4, 1396/June 26th–30th, 1976. Beside examining the nature of mission and of *da'wah*, and the experience of each community of the missionary/*da'wah* activity of the other, the purpose of the conference was to promote reciprocal understanding between Muslims and Christians and to explore the means for a *modus vivendi* assuring the spiritual well-being of all.

2. The conference is in essential agreement that their respective communities, wherever they constitute a minority of the population, should enjoy a *de jure* existence; that each religious community should be entitled to live its religious life in accordance with its religion in perfect freedom. The conference upholds the principle of religious freedom recognizing that the Muslims as well as the Christians must enjoy the full liberty to convince and be convinced, and to practise their faith and order their religious life in accordance with their own religious laws and principles; that the individual is perfectly entitled to maintain his/her religious integrity in obedience to his/her religious principles and in faithfulness to his/her religious identity.

3. The conference agrees that the family is a supremely precious and necessary institution. It expresses serious con-

cern over the threats of disintegration and secularization facing the family institution, and it recommends that religious family law, whether Muslim or Christian, be not interfered with or changed in any way, directly or indirectly, by outsiders to their traditions. It also agrees that the family and community should have the right to ensure the religious education of their children by organizing their own schools, or by having teachers of their own denominations to teach religion to their children in the school, or by other suitable means. In any case they should be allowed to organize their cultural and spiritual life without outside interference, though with sensitivity to the situation in multi-religious societies.

4. The conference was grieved to hear that some Christians in some Muslim countries have felt themselves limited in the exercise of their religious freedom and have been denied their right to church buildings. The Muslim participants regard such violation as contrary to Islamic law as well as to the principle of religious freedom enunciated above.

5. The conference recognizes fully the right of Christians as well as of Muslims to order their corporate life in accordance with the injunctions of their own religious principles and laws, and to have and maintain all requisite institutions in accordance with their religious principles and laws as equal citizens.

6. The Christian participants extend to their Muslim brethren their full sympathy for the moral wrongs which the Muslim world has suffered at the hands of colonialists, neo-colonialists and their accomplices. The conference is aware that Muslim-Christian relations have been affected by mistrust, suspicion and fear. Instead of co-operating for their common good, Muslims and Christians have been estranged and alienated from one another. After more than a century of colonialism during which many missionaries served the interests of the colonial powers, whether deliberately or unconsciously, the Muslims have felt reluctant to co-operate with the Christians whom they have fought as agents of their oppressors. Although the time has certainly come to turn a

new page in this relationship, the Muslims are still reluctant to take the step because their suspicion of Christian intentions continues. The reason is the undeniable fact that many of the Christian missionary services today continue to be undertaken for ulterior motives. Taking advantage of Muslim ignorance, of Muslim need for educational, health, cultural and social services, of Muslim political stresses and crises, of their economic dependence, political division and general weakness and vulnerability, these missionary services have served purposes other than holy – proselytism, that is, adding members to the Christian community for reasons other than spiritual. Recently revealed linkages of some of these services with the intelligence offices of some big powers confirm and intensify an already aggravated situation. The conference strongly condemns all such abuse of diakonia (service). Its Christian members dissociate themselves in the name of Christianity from any service which has degraded itself by having any purpose whatever beside agape (love for God and neighbour). They declare that any diakonia undertaken for any ulterior motive is a propaganda instrument and not an expression of agape. They agree to exercise their full power and use whatever means at their disposal to bring Christian churches and religious organizations to a proper awareness of this situation.

7. The conference, being painfully aware that Muslim attitudes to Christian mission have been so adversely affected by the abuse of diakonia, strongly urges Christian churches and religious organizations to suspend their misused diakonia activities in the world of Islam. Such a radical measure is necessary to cleanse the atmosphere of Muslim-Christian relations and orientate them towards mutual recognition and co-operation worthy of the two great religions. The conference urges strongly that all material assistance donated by outside churches and religious organizations henceforth be distributed wherever possible through or in co-operation with the governments and local communities of people for whom they are intended, respecting the dignity and integrity of the people concerned.

8. The conference urges that soon after the measures

mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs begin to be implemented, Muslims and Christians should be invited to an assembly representative of the two faiths to consider the methods of mission and *da'wah*, and the rules pertinent to each religion, and to seek modalities for enabling each religion to exercise its missionary call/*da'wah* in accordance with its own faith. The conference recognizes that mission and *da'wah* are essential religious duties of both Christianity and Islam, and that the suspension of misused diakonia services is to the end of re-establishing mission in the future on a religiously sound basis acceptable to both. Such an assembly may also establish permanent organs with Christian and Muslim participation for the purpose of preventing or dealing with aberrations or violations of Muslim-Christian understanding by either party.

9. The conference is aware that good neighbourly and co-operative relations between Christians and Muslims cannot exist or endure unless there is a deep-anchored reciprocal understanding of theologies, histories, moral and legal doctrines, social and political theories and problems of acculturation and modernization faced by the two faiths. To this end the conference urges that the World Council of Churches, the Vatican and the international Islamic organizations sponsor conferences at which these themes will be examined and discussed at regular intervals.

10. The conference, and especially the Muslim participants, express their deep and heartfelt appreciation to the WCC and the editors of the IRM for calling and sponsoring this conference. All participants express their joy that God has granted them the grace to bear in patience and empathize with one another. They are thankful to God that this conference may have made some contribution toward purifying the atmosphere of Muslim-Christian relations, and they pray that relations between their people may soon blossom into spiritual fellowship, to the glory of God alone.

THIRD NATIONAL MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE
Villa Adelaide, Tagaytay City, Philippines.
July 28 to 30, 1978

A MEMORANDUM

At the initiative and under the sponsorship of the Muslim community, we are ten Christians and twelve Muslims who have come together in the lovely surroundings of Tagaytay City for the Third National Muslim-Christian Dialogue. All of us are variously involved in the problems of Muslim-Christian relations in the Southern Philippines as educators, development workers, religious and community leaders, and government officials. Although we have not come as official spokesmen for the institutions with which we are associated, we have sought in this dialogue to address ourselves in an open and candid manner to the issues and circumstances which continue to impede harmonious relations between Filipino Muslims and Christians.

Our meeting place overlooks the panoramic beauty of Lake Taal. Little puffs of white smoke from the island in the middle of the lake remind us that beneath the surface is an active volcano which has erupted from time to time in the past, even the recent past, with devastating effects for human beings. The symbolism of this fact is not lost on us who know something of the devastating consequences of the civil eruptions which have occurred in the beautiful land of the Southern Philippines because human beings would not heed the signals of the social tremors and puffs of smoke demanding that precautions be taken.

Our purpose has been to call attention to these tremors and puffs of smoke, which continue to warn of social upheavals, and to specify some of the precautions which should be taken if further pain and loss are to be avoided.

I. Developments since previous dialogues

Our discussion began with a review of what has happened in Muslim-Christian relations since the two previous national dialogues, especially regarding the concerns and recommendations that surfaced from those dialogues. We agreed that government programmes for the uplift of the Muslims have not been fully implemented. Much publicity has been given to socio-economic programmes in Mindanao and Sulu, but only a small portion has benefited the people living in this area. Presidential Decree 410 remains to be implemented for the protection of the traditional and ancestral lands of Muslims and other cultural communities.

We are pleased to note that efforts to foster understanding between Muslims and Christians have borne some fruit. Local dialogues have been held, especially among the youth of Mindanao. The NCCP Programme Aimed at Christian Education about Muslims (PACEM) has produced resource material which Roman Catholics and Protestants are beginning to use. The Mindanao-Sulu Secretariat for Social Action (MISSSA) and the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC) of the Roman Catholic Church have spoken and acted decisively to help remove prejudices, injustices and sufferings among both Muslims and Christians. The Mindanao-Sulu Conference on Justice and Development (MSCJD) has been formed with representatives of the cultural communities in the area to call attention and seek peaceful solutions to problems and causes of injustices and abuses. We also note that now Muslims have a voice in the Church-Military Liaison Committee (CMLC).

There has been some increase in economic opportunities for Muslims on a small scale, but the average income of the Muslims is still far behind that of most Christian Filipinos in Mindanao and Sulu. The situation among Muslim refugees remains critical and in some ways has worsened. Every effort must be made to provide for the immediate needs of these refugees and to make provisions for their return to their original homes and farms.

We note with pleasure that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), and the National Council

of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) have both endorsed in principle the *Shari'a*-based personal law for Muslim Filipinos. We regret to note that this personal law code for Muslims has yet to be implemented.

A guidebook of Mindanao and Sulu to help remove distorted images of Muslims and to give a more accurate understanding of them, remains to be written. We are glad to learn that the Dansalan Research Centre has plans to produce such a guidebook in the near future. Much time was spent in reviewing the stereotyped negative images of Muslims which are still perpetuated through classroom and textbooks in both public and private schools and even in documents coming from the government itself.

Many of the issues dealt with in past dialogues continue to irritate Muslim-Christian relations, thus we feel compelled to reiterate many of the same recommendations that have been made in our dialogues. These irritants must be dealt with if there is to be any hope for improvement in Muslim-Christian relations.

II. A survey of the present situation

Our assessment of the present situation was carried out in a series of free-wheeling and penetrating group and plenary discussions in the course of which we achieved solid consensus on a number of points.

We note with satisfaction that Christians and Muslims of goodwill have started to construct bridges of friendship which, if they turn out to be sturdy and dependable, can eventually help bring our people together in a harmonious, united society. So far these bridges are only 'lines out', but they provide a basis of hope for the future. At the same time, we are aware that there is still much to be done. We note with regret and a measure of anxiety that no fundamental changes can be seen as yet in the social and political structures of our relations. We lament over reports of the frequent violent and coercive actions to which some groups and individuals, both Christian and Muslim, resort, in order to resolve differences. We are pained every time we learn of the suffering, killing and destruction perpetrated by Filipinos

against Filipinos, and we are dismayed by the fact that the ceasefire agreed upon at Tripoli in December, 1976 has been more violated than observed.

A peaceful, just and lasting solution to the basic problems in the Southern Philippines has so far proven elusive. It has been partly caused by disagreement among those concerned on what the basic problems are. Some insist that they are economic and educational, and the solution involves mainly economic and educational development. Others insist that the problems are basically political, i.e. having to do with a Muslim Filipino sense of 'nationality' – a phenomenon seen in many countries of the world, hence, the solution must be largely political in nature, presumably involving some form of autonomy for the Muslims.

We are led to wonder if Christians and Muslims are really listening to each other.

All of us delighted in the holding of substantive negotiations between Government and MNLF representatives late in 1976 and early 1977, and shared in the widespread disappointment at the collapse of negotiations in April, 1977. We are joining our voices with all those Muslims and Christians who urge the resumption of negotiations as quickly as possible. We implore both sides to negotiate in good faith, avoiding inflexibility respecting non-essentials, and in the awareness that with the negotiators rests the hope of ending the flow of tears and the cries of anguish from millions of suffering men, women and children.

We are distressed by incidents of kidnapping and other acts of terrorism directed against non-combatant civilians by bad elements on both sides of the conflict. We feel that these acts have set back efforts at reconciliation. For the Muslim side, we believe that most of these incidents can be explained (not excused) by the crisis of leadership in the Muslim areas and by the efforts of some individuals and groups there to demonstrate that the local leaders have lost control over their people or have been alienated from them. On the Christian side, such acts can be accounted for partly by a lack of discipline in some units of the armed forces, the activities of agents provocateur, and the inability to prevent armed civilians from taking the law into their own hands in some areas.

We are aware of the plans announced by the Government for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the areas most affected by hostilities. We have seen some of the results of these announced programmes in terms of electrification here, a cemented road there, an irrigation project over there, and so forth. But we are also aware that most of the development programmes of the Government are but promissory notes on the future and that a number of announcements of projects completed are either misleading or simply untrue. We cannot close our ears to queries about how and where the much-touted heavily-funded development projects have been implemented. We cannot be indifferent to insistent complaints concerning the minimal, inefficient and even incompetent application of public funds and resources in the Muslim areas of Mindanao and Sulu. This situation fosters frustration, anger and doubts about the Government's sincerity to meet the needs of the suffering and impoverished people.

We cannot but point out again – as we have pointed out in our previous dialogues – that the heavy military presence in both the Christian and Muslim areas of the South continues to foster fears, tensions, anger and incidents of violence directed particularly against the voiceless poor Christians and Muslims. The problem is not simply the poor discipline of some military personnel, it is also the very policy of stationing large numbers of soldiers in civilian areas which then take on the character of being under military occupation.

The persistent existence of negative images and attitudes of Christians regarding the Muslims, and vice versa, stands as an enormous obstacle to wholesome Muslim-Christian relations. Our dialogues in the past have pointed to this problem in the clearest language. It is obvious that the educational system has to be reassessed in this regard and reprogrammed if it is to be an effective instrument of national reconciliation, harmony and cohesion. We further feel that the reshaping of attitudes should not be limited to the school premises alone but should permeate to all sectors and segments of society.

III. Recommendations

Based on our review of developments in Muslim-Christian relations since the previous national dialogues, and our assessment of the present situation, we are moved to make the recommendations listed below. These recommendations are embodied in the various appended documents (resolutions, 'appeals' and position papers) which are sent together with copies of the memorandum to the individuals and bodies most appropriate for their consideration and implementation. At the same time our recommendations constitute an agenda for discussion and action for ourselves as we return to our various places to continue to work for a better day in Christian-Muslim relations.

1. We recommend and urge that the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front resume their negotiations as soon as possible, reaffirm the ceasefire immediately, and implement the non-controversial terms of the Tripoli Agreement now, in the interest of peace and progress.
2. We reiterate our support for the establishment of a substantive autonomy for areas of heavy Muslim habitation which will include reserved powers over religion, education and internal security; delineation of specified territory as the area of autonomy within the Muslim traditional homeland; powers of local legislation and taxation; and shared authority over the development of natural resources within the area of autonomy.
3. We recommend that the Islamic Conference continue its material assistance to Muslim Filipinos in the form of financial resources for improvement of madrasas, teacher training, Arabic and English instruction, mosques and medical facilities, and so forth: that the Conference establish a committee, through its diplomatic representatives in the Philippines, to oversee the proper disbursement and utilization of funds for approved projects, in co-ordination with the Philippine Government and recognized religious leaders.

4. We recommend to the Philippine Government and the MNLF forces that there be an absolute ceasefire in Mindanao and Sulu during the sacred Fast month of Ramadan; that the curfew hours be lifted wherever they are still in effect, during that period; and that the controls over food supplies and medicines be relaxed, where they are imposed, so that Muslims can face the special burdens they must carry for the weeks of the Fast.
5. We recommend acceleration of the 'return to normalcy' including the lifting of Martial Law, in the nation as a whole, and in Mindanao and Sulu in particular; and to that end, we plead for an immediate reduction and eventual phasing out of the military forces in the region.
6. We recommend the adoption by the Government of specific steps towards the identification of priorities for the efficient and just use of public financial and other resources and for the proper channelling of resources to the intended recipients. It is suggested that these steps include public announcement of the resources and their recipients; a system of accountability that involves information dissemination to the public; consultation with the private sector concerning priorities and implementation of programmes; and the allocation of a higher proportion of resources to those parts of the population which have the least economic and social benefits.
7. We recommend that specific strategies be devised for countering the persistent and deeply-rooted negative and distorted image of Muslim Filipinos in the minds of the Christian population of the nation. These strategies will include better dissemination of available publications on Muslim culture prepared by reliable Muslim and Christian writers; inclusion in school curricula, at all levels, of materials on Muslim Filipino history and culture; revision of popular textbooks reflecting the negative 'Moro image'; appointment of

a qualified Muslim to the Textbook Board and to the Philippine Historical Commission; the provision in teacher-training courses of instruction about the available resources and current scholarship on the Muslim Filipinos; and the devising of guidelines for mass media and other channels of public communication on how to handle constructively information and news about Muslim Filipinos.

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The series of DOCUMENTS ON CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS is intended for Muslims who desire to study Christianity and for those who meet Christians in various situations all over the world, ranging from co-operation and dialogue to encounters in the mission field. The series consists of collections of documents, each covering a special theme, considered to be of value for Muslims and assisting them to obtain information from original sources. The series will concentrate on current issues of special concern to Muslims and the collections of documents will be published at convenient intervals.

THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION is an educational and research organization devoted to making Islam a living reality in our age. For this purpose, it aims to improve human communication and develop a better understanding of Islam among all people of the world, Muslim and non-Muslim, so as to galvanize man to the message and ideal of One God and the unity of mankind, as brought by all the Prophets of God throughout the ages, last of whom was the Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah and peace be on him). The Foundation has research units in Islamic Economics, Christian-Muslim Relations, Muslim Central Asia and Literature for Children. Its regular publications include *Muslim World Book Review* (quarterly), *Index of Islamic Literature* (quarterly), *Soviet Muslims Brief* (two-monthly) and *FOCUS on Christian-Muslim Relations* (monthly).